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SUBJECT:STANDARDS HARMONIZATION: OPTIMUM METRIC FASTENERS

REF: (A) EC BRUSSELS 2427; (B) BONN 4580; (C) NATO 1615;

(D) BONN A-110; (E) STATE 051493

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1. SUMMARY: IN ORDER TO OBTAIN FURTHER INFORMATION REGARD-

ING EC AND GERMAN ALLEGATIONS OF POSSIBLE NTB EFFECTS OF PROSPECTIVE ADOPTION BY U.S. INDUSTRY OF AN OPTIMUM METRIC FASTENER STANDARD (OMFS) STATE AND COMMERCE HAVE DISCUSSED PROBLEM WITH U.S. INDUSTRY REPS WHO SUPPORT OMFS, THE CHAIRMAN OF THE INTERDEPARTMENTAL SCREW THREAD COMMITTEE (ISTC), AND DR. VOLKER THURNAU, DEPUTY GENERAL MANAGER OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF GERMAN MACHINERY MANUFACTURERS (VDMA). TO DATE NO ONE SET OF STANDARDS HAS BEEN ADOPTED IN U.S. CHANCES NOW APPEAR BETTER THAT U.S. AND EUROPEANS MAY ACHIEVE COMPROMISE AT UPCOMING ISO MEETING IN MUNICH BASED ON SHANNON MEETING. BOTH SIDES HAVE AGREED TO HOLD DOWN INITIATIVES FOR OR AGAINST OMFS UNTIL AFTER MUNICH MEETING. END SUMMARY.

2. U.S. INDUSTRY REPRESENTATIVES INTERESTED IN OMFS AND METRIC J (AIRCRAFT) MET MARCH 7 IN AN ATTEMPT TO WORK OUT COMPROMISE ON ADOPTION OF ONE SET OF U.S. METRIC

FASTENER STANDARDS, BUT NO COMPROMISE WAS REACHED. PARTIES AGREED THAT OMFS AND METRIC J STANDARDS ARE NOT SUSCEPTIBLE TO ADJUSTMENT TO ACHIEVE SINGLE STANDARD BECAUSE OF APPLICATION DIFFERENCES. THE RESULT OF THE MARCH 7 MEETING LEAVES ISTC, AS BEFORE, WITHOUT INDUSTRY REACTION TO ITS PROPOSAL FOR ONE SET OF STANDARDS FOR USE IN GOVERNMENT PROCUREMENT. AMERICAN NATIONAL STANDARDS INSTITUTE (ANSI) DISTRIBUTED BALLOTS TO ALL MEMBERS OF COMMITTEE WHICH DEVELOPED OMFS TO DETERMINE WHETHER ONE OR TWO U.S. STANDARD(S) PREFERABLE. LIKELIHOOD IS THAT TWO STANDARDS WILL BE SUPPORTED. ISTC NOW CONSIDERING POSSIBILITY OF ADOPTING METRIC J AND A METRIC J WITH MODIFICATIONS TO ACCOMMODATE OMFS. DURING A MARCH 20 MEETING BETWEEN STATE, COMMERCE, AND STR AND CHAIRMAN OF ISTC, POSSIBILITY OF ADOPTING ISO WITH A RESTRICTED NUMBER OF SIZES DISCUSSED BUT REACTION NOT ENCOURAGING.

3. USG PURCHASES ABOUT 5 PERCENT OF TOTAL U.S. ANNUAL FASTENER REQUIREMENTS--OR 100 MILLION DOLLARS OF 2 BILLION DOLLARS--AND THUS HAS SOME INFLUENCE ON INDUSTRY TRENDS. ISTC THEREFORE INTENDS TO WORK CAREFULLY IN DEFINING ITS RECOMMENDATIONS. WHILE TWO OR THREE CORPORATIONS REPORT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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TEDLY HAVE COMMITTED THEMSELVES TO OMFS, MOST OF U.S. INDUSTRY HAVE NOT MADE ANY DETERMINATION. INDUSTRY DECISION WILL DEPEND ON THE ISTC WHICH WILL PROBABLY NOT MAKE A DECISION SOON.

4. OMFS SPOKESMEN MET WITH GOVERNMENT REPS MARCH 19 AND GAVE FIRM IMPRESSION THAT, WHILE THEY INTEND TO CONTINUE MOVING FORWARD WITH OMFS, THEY ARE WILLING TO SEEK

ACCOMMODATION WITH EUROPEANS. OMFS SPONSORS SEE EUROPEANS AS INTRANSIGENT IN THE PAST AND NOT WILLING TO COMPROMISE UNLESS SHOWN THAT "SUBSTANTIAL" IMPROVEMENTS ARE BEING OFFERED. WHILE OMFS IMPROVEMENTS MAY NOT BE "SUBSTANTIAL" THEY ARE REAL (CONFIRMED BY ISTC CHAIRMAN) AND OMFS GROUP IS ANXIOUS TO PROVIDE WHATEVER TECHNICAL DATA EUROPEANS FEEL IS NECESSARY. (ISTC CHAIRMAN BELIEVES THAT EUROPEANS MAY NOT HAVE FOCUSED ON THE TECHNICAL ASPECTS OF OMFS). STUDIES IN U.S. INDICATE THAT ISO AND OMFS ARE FUNCTIONALLY INTERCHANGEABLE. BECAUSE THERE ARE 58 OR SO STANDARD THREADS, THERE IS SOME INTERFERENCE IN VERY SMALL NUMBER OF CASES, BUT OMFS SUPPORTERS MAINTAIN THAT EVEN IN THESE CASES NO SAFETY PROBLEMS ARE INVOLVED.

5. SHANNON MEETING ALSO DISCUSSED WITH OMFS SPOKESMEN. A NUMBER OF TECHNICAL COMPROMISE PROPOSALS WERE REACHED AT THAT MEETING WHICH COULD WELL FORM BASIS FOR A COMPROMISE BETWEEN ISO AND OMFS (DETAILS BEING AIRPOUCHED). A MAJOR ACCOMMODATION AT SHANNON BY OMFS SPONSORS, WHICH HAS

HERETOFORE BEEN OVERLOOKED, IS PROVISION OF A TRANSITION PERIOD. THIS WILL ALLOW RETOOLING AND DIE COSTS (PERISHABLE IN ANY EVENT) TO BE ABSORBED OVER A PERIOD OF TIME. LENGTH OF TIME TO BE PROVIDED IS OPEN FOR DISCUSSION.

6. DR. VOLKER THURNAU OF VDMA VISITED DEPARTMENT ON MARCH 20 AND DISCUSSED GERMAN AND EC PROBLEMS WITH OMFS, AND RECENT GERMAN PRESS ATTACKS WITH CHIEF, STA. SHANNON MEETING ALSO DISCUSSED AND THURNAU APPEARED IMPRESSED WITH POSSIBILITY FOR COMPROMISE BEING OFFERED AND, IN PARTICULAR, WITH TRANSITION PERIOD. SHANNON COMPROMISES WILL BE DISCUSSED AT JOINT ISO TECHNICAL COMMITTEE-1 (THREAD PROFILES) AND TECHNICAL COMMITTEE-2 (BOLTS AND LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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NUTS) MEETING TENTATIVELY SCHEDULED FOR APRIL 17-18 IN MUNICH. THURNAU STATED THAT THESE MEETINGS MAY WELL LEAD TO COMPROMISE SOLUTION.

7. BOTH U.S. OMFS SUPPORTERS AND THURNAU ATTENDED U.S. METRIC COUNCIL CONFERENCE HELD WASHINGTON MARCH 17-18. IT APPEARS THAT ONE RESULT OF SUCH ATTENDANCE WAS AGREEMENT THAT BOTH SIDES WOULD REFRAIN FROM FURTHER PUBLIC AND PRIVATE MOVES, EITHER FOR OR AGAINST OMFS, UNTIL AFTER MUNICH MEETING.

8. MUCH OF ABOVE INFORMATION IS SUPPLIED FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES ONLY. POSTS SHOULD USE DISCRETION IN DISCUSSING CONTENTS WITH INTERESTED HOST GOVERNMENTS AND EMPHASIZE PARAS 6 AND 7. U.S. POSITION IS THAT NEGOTIA-

TIONS SHOULD PROCEED ON PRIVATE BASIS BETWEEN INDUSTRY
REPRESENTATIVES OF U.S. AND EUROPE. RECENT INDICATIONS
ARE THAT COMPROMISE IS POSSIBLE AND HOPEFULLY ISSUES CAN
BE RESOLVED BY PARTIES THEMSELVES. FOR THE PRESENT POSTS
SHOULD ATTEMPT TO PRESS FOR OPEN-MINDED APPROACH BY BOTH
SIDES IN MUNICH. KISSINGER

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